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ABSTRACT

A variety of resource documents and articles are included in this professional improvement packet that is designed to assist teachers and administrators in reducing the conditions under which censorship might occur. The documents presented are: the Indiana code laws concerning textbook adoption; the American Library Association's library bill of rights, resolution on challenged materials, and statement on "labeling"; forms for requesting new materials and for reconsideration of instructional materials; a checklist for survival against censorship; and a model statement for academic freedom in collective bargaining contracts. A position paper on censorship, a discussion of selection versus censorship, and a collection of case studies are offered, along with several ways of dealing with censorship. More specific articles examine the Gabler crusade against "improper" textbooks, Indiana State Senator Grubbins's position on education, and the various targets of textbook pressure groups. An application for the Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom and an extensive bibliography are also included. (JK)

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CENSORSHIP

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PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT PACKET

EA 012 818

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

INDIANA STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
150 West Market Street Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

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This Professional Improvement Packet (PIP) is designed to assist teachers, administrators and other interested parties in reducing the conditions under which censorship might occur. To achieve this, a variety of resource documents have been included.

Information About Selection, Censorship and Censors

Selection vs. Censorship

Teachers and librarians sometimes argue that censorship and book selection are much the same thing. Lester Asheim in his "Not Censorship but Selection" (Wilson Library Bulletin, September 1953, p. 67) makes a distinction which every librarian and teacher should know and follow in book selection:

Selection, then begins with a presumption in favor of liberty of thought; censorship, with a presumption in favor of thought control. Selection's approach to the book is positive, seeking its values in the book as a book and in the book as a whole. Censorship's approach is negative, seeking for vulnerable characteristics wherever they can be found--anywhere within the book, or even outside it. Selection seeks to protect the right of the reader to read; censorship seeks to protect--not the right--but the reader himself from the fancied effects of his reading. The selector has faith in the intelligence of the reader; the censor has faith only in his own.

In other words, selection is democratic while censorship is authoritarian, and in our democracy we have traditionally tended to put our trust in the selector rather than in the censor. (p. 190)
Asheim, Lester. "Not Censorship but Selection," Wilson Library Bulletin, September, 1953.

* * * * *

The Censor

The censor, however good and decent and sincere and religious and dedicated and patriotic, is usually supremely confident of his or her own rightness. The censor seems certain while the teacher can never be. The censor knows truth while the teacher is only trying to perceive it. The censor sometimes claims to have a direct pipeline to God and truth and right while the teacher can make no such sacrilegious assertion. The censor may claim that he knows what is good for every person while the teacher knows only that each of us must take a personal trip through this world searching for the good. The censor can afford the luxury of arrogance and omniscience while the teacher can not so pretend. (p. 193)
Donelson, Ken. "Censorship: Some Issues and Problems," Theory Into Practice, Volume XIV, November 3, June, 1975.

ISTA Position Paper Censorship

In a democratic society the major purposes of education are to assist persons to develop the desire and ability to think for themselves; to strive to understand their own and other cultures as a means of better understanding themselves and others; to live compassionately, considerately and cooperatively with others; to develop and exercise both self-discipline and self-motivation; to achieve a positive self-understanding; to acquire the ability to laugh at a world which sometimes seems cruel; and to develop those skills necessary to survive in and contribute to the larger society.

The primary strength of the republican form of government as practiced in the United States of America has been, is, and will continue to be an educated public which has experienced, as well as benefited from, the major purposes of education cited above. Because these purposes promote diversity, it is inevitable in the give-and-take of a democratic society that the political, moral, and aesthetic beliefs of an individual or group will occasionally collide with the beliefs of others.

One of the great freedoms of our country is the opportunity to encounter and to examine diverse opinions in an open forum in which decisions are based on the judgements of the majority.

This freedom is a double-edged sword in that it provides freedom of thought, speech, inquiry, and action for the protection of individuals and groups; but, at the same time, it provides opportunities for groups or individuals to impose their points of view on others.

This imposition of a select or limited viewpoint is censorship. It is by nature authoritarian and begins with a set of preconceived standards held by any individual or group. Censorship, with its bias for thought control, creates an unacceptable learning environment in schools. Free inquiry in the search for truth is a necessity. By denying freedom of speech, thought, and press, censorship stifles intellectual freedom and cripples human creativity. It restricts the students' ability to learn to make critical evaluations that will enable them to function successfully within society.

Frequently censorship is a cover for hidden motives. For example, there are factions in American society who view the examination of such topics as sex, politics, war and peace, ethics, values, and adolescent behavior within the schools as dangerous. They also consider individuals such as teachers and authors whose beliefs or life styles differ from their own as a threat to their personal ideals or values. Also, in time of frustration people often use the school as a scapegoat, blaming the school when they can find no solution to the problems of life that face them. The censor's motives, however decent, sincere, religious, dedicated, and patriotic, are supremely self-righteous. The censor claims to know what is good for every person. The teacher, however, working within the purposes of education in a democratic society, knows only that each of us must personally search for what is good.

The Association affirms that selection of educational materials begins with an awareness of the needs of students who come from diverse backgrounds. It entails an open-minded choice of materials aimed at providing a sampling of a wide field of information. Selection recognizes the need to make choices but attempts to approach the issue as a positive situation to protect the rights of the individual to acquire knowledge from any source as guaranteed or implied within our constitutional tradition.

Even though obvious limitations of time, facilities, and budgets do set parameters on the selection of educational materials, to deny the freedom of choice in fear that it will be unwisely used is to destroy the freedom itself.

In order to meet the challenges of censorship by individuals or groups who wish to limit the functional effectiveness of schools, school administrative and teacher personnel must mutually develop and appropriately apply formal, definitive policies which provide for the protection of academic freedom of teachers and which include written procedures for evaluation and selection of instructional materials. These policies should emphasize comprehensive objectives which include Board of Education responsibilities; local association responsibilities; strong curriculum-based criteria; and all-level professional review procedures. The ISTA recommends that these policies and procedures be written and their provisions included in the master contract mutually agreed to by each local Board of Education and recognized teacher bargaining agent. Such mutually agreed to policies should include provisions for a review committee composed of teachers, administrators, students, community representatives, and parents and a specific policy and procedure for reconsideration of challenged instructional material.

These policies must include provisions to protect the right of a parent or guardian who wishes to monitor his or her own child's exposure to specific material. Such monitoring should be limited to that parent's child or children. In those cases where material is to be withheld from one student, as a result of a decision made after following the appropriate, approved procedures, suitable alternative materials and assignments should be provided to that student.

In accordance with the ISTA's goals and objectives for improved educational practices, the Instruction and Professional Development Committee of the Association is therefore presenting this position paper on censorship.

INDIANA CODE

Laws Concerning Textbook Adoption

I.C. 20-10.1-9-10 Examination of Textbooks

Sec. 10. Examination of Textbooks. The Commission on Textbook Adoptions shall carefully examine all books which are submitted for approval and shall meet at the time and place announced for the purpose of finally adopting textbooks for use in each subject and grade for which notice has been given. In making its examination, the Commission shall consider the amount and quality of material, subject matter, style of binding, mechanical execution and price. (Formerly: Acts 1975, P.L.240, Sec. I).

I.C. 20-10.1-9-11 Restriction on Textbook Content

Sec. 11. Restriction on Textbook Content. The Commission on Textbook Adoptions shall not approve a textbook which contains anything of a partisan or sectarian character. (Formerly: Acts 1975, P.L.240, Sec. I).

I.C. 20-10.1-9-21 Local Textbook Selection

Sec. 21. Local Textbook Selection. The superintendent of schools shall be responsible for the establishment of procedures for textbook adoption. The procedures shall include, but not be limited to, the involvement of teachers and parents on an advisory committee for the preparation of recommendations for textbook adoptions. The majority of the members of the advisory committee shall be teachers and not less than forty percent (40%) of the committee shall be parents. These recommendations shall be submitted to the superintendent in accordance with the established procedures in the local school corporation. The governing body, upon receiving these recommendations from the superintendent, shall adopt, from the state textbook adoption lists, a textbook for use in teaching each of the various subjects in the schools under the governing body's jurisdiction. A special committee of teachers and parents may also be appointed to review books, magazines, and audio-visual material used or proposed for use in the classroom to supplement state adopted textbooks, and may make recommendations to the superintendent and the governing body concerning the use of such material. Each textbook selection shall be for an initial period of five (5) years or for as long as the selected textbook's state adoption is effective, whichever is less, and any selection may be extended beyond that period for as long as the local superintendent deems the textbook satisfactory and as long as it remains on the appropriate state adopted list. (Formerly: Acts 1975, P.L.240, Sec. I; Acts 1975, P.L.241, Sec. 4).

Library Bill of Rights

The Council of the American Library Association reaffirms its belief in the following basic policies which should govern the services of all libraries.

1. As a responsibility of library service, books and other library materials selected should be chosen for values of interest, information and enlightenment of all the people of the community. In no case should library materials be excluded because of the race or nationality or the social, political, or religious views of the authors.

2. Libraries should provide books and other materials presenting all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our times; no library materials should be proscribed or removed from libraries because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

3. Censorship should be challenged by libraries in the maintenance of their responsibility to provide public information and enlightenment.

4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

5. The rights of an individual to the use of a library should not be denied or abridged because of his age, race, religion, national origins or social or political views.

6. As an institution of education for democratic living, the library should welcome the use of its meeting rooms for socially useful and cultural activities and discussion of current public questions. Such meeting places should be available on equal terms to all groups in the community regardless of the beliefs and affiliations of their members, provided that the meetings be open to the public.

Adopted June 18, 1948.

Amended February 2, 1961, and June 27, 1967, by the ALA Council.

RESOLUTION ON CHALLENGED MATERIALS
An Interpretation of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

WHEREAS, The LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS states that no library materials should be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval, and

WHEREAS, Constitutionally protected expression is often separated from unprotected expression only by a dim and uncertain line, and

WHEREAS, Any attempt, be it legal or extra-legal, to regulate or suppress material must be closely scrutinized to the end that protected expression is not abridged in the process, and

WHEREAS, The Constitution requires a procedure designed to focus searchingly on the question before speech can be suppressed, and

WHEREAS, The dissemination of a particular work which is alleged to be unprotected should be completely undisturbed until an independent determination has been made by a judicial officer, including an adversary hearing,

THEREFORE, THE PREMISES CONSIDERED, BE IT RESOLVED, That the American Library Association declares as a matter of firm principle that no challenged library material should be removed from any library under any legal or extra-legal pressure, save after an independent determination by a judicial officer in a court of competent jurisdiction and only after an adversary hearing, in accordance with well-established principles of law.

Adopted by the ALA Council, June 25, 1971.

STATEMENT ON LABELING

An Interpretation of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

Because labeling violates the spirit of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS, the American Library Association opposes the technique of labeling as a means of predisposing readers against library materials for the following reasons:

1. Labeling¹ is an attempt to prejudice the reader, and as such it is a censor's tool.
2. Although some find it easy and even proper, according to their ethics, to establish criteria for judging publications as objectionable, injustice and ignorance rather than justice and enlightenment result from such practices, and the American Library Association must oppose the establishment of such criteria.
3. Libraries do not advocate the ideas found in their collections. The presence of a magazine or book in a library does not indicate an endorsement of its contents by the library.
4. No one person should take the responsibility of labeling publications. No sizable group of persons would be likely to agree either on the types of material which should be labeled or the sources of information which should be regarded with suspicion. As a practical consideration, a librarian who labels a book or magazine might be sued for libel.
5. If materials are labeled to pacify one group, there is no excuse for refusing to label any item in the library's collection. Because authoritarians tend to suppress ideas and attempt to coerce individuals to conform to a specific ideology, the American Library Association opposes such efforts which aim at closing any path to knowledge.

Adopted July 13, 1951.

Amended June 25, 1971, by the ALA Council.

¹"Labeling," as it is referred to in the STATEMENT ON LABELING, is the practice of describing or designating certain library materials, by affixing a prejudicial label to them or segregating them by a prejudicial system, so as to pre-dispose readers against the materials.

10.

Information About Selection of Instructional Materials

Each local school corporation needs to have a mutually agreed to local policy concerning the selection of instructional materials. The local classroom teachers association is encouraged to take the leadership in seeing that such a policy is developed and mutually agreed to.

The policy should reflect local conditions and local concerns as well as the following factors:

1. Selection procedures need to involve teachers, parents, administrators, students and community members.
2. The selection policy needs to include a statement of philosophy concerning materials selection.
3. The policy should provide procedures which give consideration to existing materials and other resources as well as previously approved curriculum programs. Such consideration will minimize duplication and the purchase of materials which will not be used.
4. The policy should be broad in scope so as to give consideration to materials suggested by teachers, administrators, students, parents and community members.
5. The policy needs to specify that the governing body (school board) of the school corporation is legally responsible for the selection of instructional materials.
6. The policy needs to specify the delegation of responsibilities to professional personnel involved in the selection process.
7. The policy should provide for a file which specifies materials which might be considered controversial. This file should also state why the material might be considered controversial and should be easily accessible to classroom teachers and administrators.
8. The policy needs to specify the selection criteria to be used in selecting instructional materials. The factors noted below should be considered.
 - A. Purpose
 - B. Timeliness
 - C. Importance of subject matter
 - D. Quality of writing/production
 - E. Reputation of the author/publisher/producer
 - F. Format
 - G. Price
 - H. Is the material related to the objectives of the course or unit?

8. (Cont'd)

- I. Is the material adaptable to the range of reading abilities of the students? In case of supplementary material, it may properly be too easy or difficult for the majority of the class.
 - J. Is the material related to the issue being studied?
 - K. Is the material used as a basic text or as supplementary material?
 - L. Is the material factually accurate?
 - M. Does the author identify unsupported generalizations based upon objective data?
 - N. Are opinions distinguished from statements or fact?
 - O. Is the material written in an objective well-balanced manner?
 - P. Does the author indicate that there are conflicting theories or opinions on the issues under discussion?
 - Q. Can use of the material help students to develop sound methods of weighing evidence and evaluating conclusions?
 - R. Have the students been helped to analyze the nature of the material and its lack of objectivity and balance?
9. The policy needs to include the definitions of the key terms such as instructional materials and approved curriculum as well as correctly identify and explain any statutory references.
10. A companion policy on academic freedom and the processing of complaints needs to be mutually developed.

REQUEST FOR NEW MATERIALS

TITLE: _____

AUTHOR: _____

PUBLISHER: _____

GENERAL TOPIC (IF SPECIFIC TITLE IS NOT BEING REQUESTED)

REQUESTED BY: NAME: _____

SCHOOL BUILDING: _____

1. FOR WHAT PURPOSE SHOULD THIS BOOK BE PURCHASED? _____

2. DID YOU READ THE ENTIRE WORK? _____ WHAT PARTS? _____

3. WHAT DO YOU FEEL MIGHT BE THE RESULT OF READING THIS WORK? _____

4. WHAT ARE THE POSITIVE FEATURES OF THIS BOOK? _____

5. WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IS THE THEME OF THIS WORK? _____

6. ARE YOU AWARE OF JUDGMENTS OF THIS WORK BY LITERARY CRITICS? _____

7. FOR WHAT USE ARE YOU RECOMMENDING THAT THIS MATERIAL BE OBTAINED?

INTERLIBRARY LOAN _____ PROFESSIONAL LIBRARY _____

RESERVE SHELF _____ CLASSROOM _____

FREE LOAN _____

14.

8. IN ITS PLACE, WHAT WORK WOULD YOU RECOMMEND THAT WOULD CONVEY AS VALUABLE A PICTURE AND PERSPECTIVE OF THE SUBJECT TREATED?
-

9. IT THIS IS A CONTROVERSIAL TOPIC:

- a. IS THE PRESENTATION IN THIS MATERIAL ACCURATE AND BALANCED

____ YES ____ NO ____ NOT KNOWN

- b. IF THIS TAKES ONE SIDE, WHICH SIDE? _____
-

- c. DOES THE SCHOOL ALREADY HAVE MATERIAL(S) ON THE OTHER SIDE(S) ____ YES. EXAMPLE _____

____ NO. WHAT MIGHT WE NEED TO OBTAIN? _____

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION
OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

15.

Title _____ ☐ Book ☐ Periodical ☐ Other _____

Author _____

Publisher _____

Request initiated by _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Tel. _____

Do you represent:

☐ Yourself _____

☐ An organization (name) _____

☐ Other group (name) _____

1. To what in the work do you object? (Please be specific, Cite
pages) _____

2. Did you read the entire work? _____ What parts? _____

3. What do you feel might be the result of reading this work? _____

4. For what age group would you recommend this work? _____

5. What do you believe is the theme of this work? _____

6. Are you aware of the teacher's purpose in using this work? _____

7. What prompted you to object to this work? _____

8. Are you aware of judgments of this work by literary critics? _____

If so, which critics? _____

16.

9. Have you read a book review of this work? _____ If so, what is the source of this review? _____
10. What would you like your library/school to do about this work?
- ☐ Do not assign/lend it to my child
- ☐ Return it to the staff selection committee/department for reevaluation
- ☐ Other. Explain _____
11. In its place, what work would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of the subject treated?

Signature _____

Date _____

Case Studies

In Warsaw, Indiana, in September and October of 1977, the Warsaw Community High School principal banned the use of three books--"The Bell Jar," "The Stepford Wives", and "Go Ask Alice"--as part of a drive to eliminate objectional material from the classroom after one school board member objected to the books.

While the school board did not vote for banning, it informally supported the principal's actions. The books were part of a "Women in Literature" English course whose young teacher protested the banning.

In December the senior citizens burned the values clarification textbooks in the wire trash can of a local park with virtually no protest from citizens.

In January 1978 the school board directed its "teachers, administrators and staff to teach students to avoid the use of profanity"? It also voted to ban all "books and materials that could be construed as objectionable."

In April two teachers, Theresa Brunau and Joan Dupont, were told their contracts would not be renewed for the next year. In May the high school principal attempted to censor a school newspaper editorial that was critical of the book burning, but the editorial was printed when the editor cited court decisions on her side. The Warsaw Community Education Association filed an unfair labor practice charge protesting the school board actions.

Hearings on the unfair labor practice were held by the Indiana Education Employment Relations Board (IEERB) several weeks later, lasting four days. The 1978 unfair labor practice was initiated by the Warsaw Community Education Association and supported by the ISTA. The IEERB hearing officer's findings upheld the charges filed by the teachers' association. In part, the findings held that:

1. Order the respondent, for the 1979-80 school year, to reverse all policies (which the complainant sets out in its original complaint) to the status quo positions, i.e.:
 - (a) All textbooks shall be restored to classroom use,
 - (b) All courses shall be restored to use,
 - (c) All personnel changes shall be reversed as they concern the Washington Elementary School,
 - (d) All working conditions shall be restored to the status quo,
 - (e) All curriculum changes shall be reversed to the status quo,
 - (f) The English and home economics department chairmanship vacancies shall be filled with qualified teachers.
2. After the return to a position of status quo, order the respondent to meet and discuss any proposed section 5 policy changes for the above matters.

3. Order the respondent to cease and desist from further failures or refusals to discuss section 5 items.
4. Dismiss the counterclaim and cross complaint with prejudice.

The ISTA has filed suit on behalf of the two dismissed teachers and these cases are pending in court.

In Kanawha County, West Virginia, 1974-75, a controversy raged between differing members of the school board and the community, reaching national attention, over choices made by the textbook selection committee.

When the board finally voted 3 to 2 for the selections, the public considered the possibility of private schools, rumors spread that the superintendent was under fire, a board member's store was picketed, and a group of citizens decided to boycott the schools unless the texts were removed.

The opening of school saw parents picketing and an increase in absences. A few of the mines were also picketed and a wildcat strike spread to mines in nearby counties and industries around and including Kanawha County.

In September Mrs. Alice Moore, the board member who had first questioned the selection, asked for the superintendent's resignation. A little while later the boycott spread to Charleston, where bus service was stopped. A few days later, the board met and came to a compromise. It removed the texts for 30 days for more review but the crowd of protestors was not appeased by this action.

During the next few days the superintendent closed 120 schools to help protect the children of the county. Much violence followed. In October a citizens review board was set up but was so diversified as to be ineffective. A board member resigned. More violence followed.

In November the board voted 4 to 1 to place the texts in school libraries with access based on parental permission, which did not satisfy the protestors. The superintendent said he would enforce compulsory attendance laws. Mrs. Moore and her followers threatened to set up their own school system, or educate their children at home.

School board action in November went along with Mrs. Moore's guide for textbooks adoption which would be used during the next textbook adoption in four curriculum areas, and screening committees were set up. They included five teachers and fifteen parents each.

In a New Jersey high school, 1972, the following books were banned by the president of the school board for "permissive liberalism": "The Affluent Society" by John Kenneth Galbraith, "The Struggle for Peace" by Leonard Beaton, and "Today's Isms, Communism, Fascism, Socialism, Capitalism," and "The Ages of Keynes" by Robert Lekachman.

The books are back on the shelves. John Everett (who the year before had had Salinger's "The Catcher in the Rye" removed) agreed to allow the titles back on the shelves with the provision that fifteen other titles would be purchased. They included books by Ayn Rand, William Buckley, Milton Friedman and John Stormer.

In New York the Queens court upheld the school board's 1971 decision to remove "Down These Mean Streets" by Piri Thomas from the junior high school. The Supreme Court would not review the Queens court decision. Two members of the Supreme Court did not go along with the decision because they felt the material was discussed in the school, and since the children were not told they could not discuss it, that it was the same as reading the book. Their contention was that if the material was discussable, it was readable.

A major victory for proponents of open access was achieved in 1975, however, when the New York School Board lifted the four year ban on the book.

In a midwestern city, 1965, a minister representing a parent of two junior high students made a complaint against "To Kill A Mockingbird." The matter was taken to the principal, who called in the assistant principal and the English teacher. After having been given the rationale for the book's use, the minister was given a complaint form. A month later he sent a letter of objection to the teacher, principal, superintendent and the newspaper.

Much time and attention was given to the matter publicly.

The assistant principal in charge of curriculum announced the decision that the book would remain on the list, and if parents objected they could make formal written objections and their children would not be required to read the book. Resolved 1966.

In an accelerated seventh grade English class, 1966, reading on the tenth and twelfth grade level, the children in a midwestern community were permitted independent reading which was followed by writing a paper on the book selected. Included on the list given the student was "The Good Earth." One girl's mother objected to her daughter's reading the book and met with the teacher to discuss the matter. The child was permitted to choose another book. However, the child had read the book and discussed it freely with classmates. Later, other students began requesting it and other books by Pearl S. Buck. The teacher then removed the books by Buck from the list even though the principal felt no need to change a program because of the demands of one parent.

In California, 1965, four citizens complained about the authors of "A Pictorial History of the Negro in America" and "The Negro Heritage in America" as having been "connected with Communist front organizations". Included were charges of promoting race hatred.

Following procedures adopted by the school board, the books were retained. A committee of six teachers and nine administrators collected data supporting the use of the books. The books were retained, but later that year a parent complained to a principal about a poem used in an English class. The principal had the poem withdrawn. The result was that the other English teachers began self censorship because of the threat of trouble.

In a community near New York City, 1964, the school board had formally selected a book selection policy and a method for processing complaints.

A mother objected to her daughter's having read "The Catcher in the Rye" and the fact that it was on the list from which to choose. The mother called the teacher and then the department head. Then not satisfied, she took the complaint to the school board. They felt other parents publicly supported or approved the book, therefore, did not ban it.

Later three local newspapers and radio gave attention to the matter. Both sides of the dispute were aired.

Then in a meeting with the school board, the department head reiterated the procedures for listing books and that "Catcher" did follow the criteria adopted by the English department and the board. Also stated was the fact that no student classroom instruction or outside reading would be forced upon students whose parents found the books objectionable, but that the school would not deny the rights of other students to read the books.

In an upper midwest community, 1961, the school board banned "1984" because they considered it obscene and informed the teacher and school librarian of their decision. The complaint came from a board member who thought his child was to be required to read the book. He later learned that that was not the case. The Board's rationale was that they had the right to determine the method of teaching. At the end of the school year the teacher lost his job, had a nervous breakdown and never got another teaching position.

- 1) Do the best professional job possible. The best professional job is easiest to defend against censorship. Try to cover all points in good professional preparation.
- 2) Make every effort to obtain a materials selection policy: ideally the policy would establish procedures that would include all interested members of your constituency - board members, administrators, students, teachers, librarians, etc.
- 3) Try to see that the procedures are in fact followed. Be sure to follow them yourself.
- 4) Be sure to include a clause protecting academic or intellectual freedom in the bargaining contract.
- 5) Ask for a clause in the bargaining contract requiring that the material selection policy be followed.
- 6) Be sure to include the right of students to an alternate assignment - recognition of the right not to read. It should be made clear that the right not to read does not mean the right to prevent other persons from reading.
- 7) Develop a procedure to be used when a citizen complains about a learning resource item. A procedure should be developed in concert with all interested parties.
- 8) The bargaining contract should require that the complaint procedure be followed by all agencies in the school or library.
- 9) Prepare statements of the rationale for using the most often censored items from the learning resource collection--books, films, periodicals, etc.
- 10) If a complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the teacher or librarian, assistance should be sought from professional organizations. NCTE and the Intellectual Freedom Committee of ALA will offer advice.
- 11) Professional organizations should work together for the conservation of first amendment rights.
 - a) Such groups should monitor legislation and send representatives to express judgements concerning bills proposed by the state legislature.
 - b) Survey at regular intervals appropriate groups of professional persons concerning the degree of censorship pressures they are currently experiencing. Publish the results in newspapers and elsewhere as a means of making the public aware of the absurdity and dangers of censorship.
 - c) Such groups should maintain liaison so that effective

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action may take place when specific cases of censorship occur.

- d) Such groups should be prepared to offer legal assistance when individual cases seem clear cut and defensible.

*Prepared by the Wisconsin Intellectual Freedom Coalition.

CHECKLIST FOR SURVIVAL AGAINST CENSORSHIP

- ___ 1. Do you have a written instructional materials selection policy?
Has it been formally adopted by your governing agency?
Is it revised and updated periodically?
- ___ 2. Does your policy include a written procedure for handling complaints?
- ___ 3. Are instructional and non-instructional personnel in your system, from Board members and central administrators to custodians, aware of the contents of your materials selection policy?
- ___ 4. Do you have open communication lines with civic, religious, educational and political bodies in your community?
- ___ 5. Do you encourage your district to maintain a vigorous public relations program on behalf of intellectual freedom?
- ___ 6. Have you prepared written rationales for using specific classroom materials, especially in regard to those that students are required to use in order to meet educational objectives?
- ___ 7. Are you aware of groups in your community who are likely to initiate complaints about instructional materials?
- ___ 8. Are you aware of groups in your community who are advocates of intellectual freedom and who might have resources they would enlist in your support?
- ___ 9. Are you aware of state and national organizations who are advocates of intellectual freedom?

Adopted from Selection Policies: A Guide to Writing and Updating.
Michigan Association for Media in Education.

MODEL STATEMENT
COLLECTIVE BARGAINING CONTRACT

Article _____

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

- A. It is the policy of the Board to educate young people in democratic tradition, to foster a recognition of individual freedom and social responsibility, and to inspire meaningful awareness of and respect for the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. It is recognized that these democratic values can best be transmitted in an atmosphere which is free from censorship and artificial restraints upon free inquiry and learning, and in which academic freedom for the teacher and the student is encouraged.
- B. Academic freedom is essential to the fulfillment of the educational purposes of _____ schools. Therefore, teachers have the right to protection from any censorship or restraint that might interfere with their obligation to pursue truth.
- C. Freedom of individual expression shall be encouraged and guaranteed by the Board to all its teachers.
- D. It is mutually recognized that freedom carries with it responsibility; academic freedom also carries with it academic responsibility which is determined by the basic ideals, goals, and institutions of the local community. Discussion and analysis of controversial issues should be conducted within the framework of the fundamental values of the community as they are expressed in the educational philosophy and objectives of the Board.

Within the preceding frame of reference and as it pertains to the course to which a teacher is assigned, academic freedom in the schools is defined as:

- 1. The right to teach and learn about controversial issues which have economic, political, scientific, or social significance.
- 2. The right to use materials which are relevant to the levels of ability and maturity of the students and to the purposes of the school system.
- 3. The right to maintain a classroom environment which is conducive to the free exchange and examination of ideas which have economic, political, scientific or social significance.
- 4. The right of teachers to participate fully in the public affairs of the community.
- 5. The right of students to hold divergent ideas as long as the expression of their dissent is done within the guide-

D. (Continued)

lines of debate and discussion which are generally accepted by teachers in a normal classroom environment.

6. The right of teachers to a free expression of conscience as private citizens with the correlative responsibility of a professional presentation of balanced views relating to controversial issues as they are studied in the classroom.

E. Guidelines for selection of controversial issues to be studied in the classroom are:

1. The issue should be suitable for students of the maturity and background represented in the class.
2. The issue should be related to the course content and help achieve course objectives.
3. The issue should provide the student an opportunity to study controversial issues which have political, economic or social significance about which they will begin to have an opinion.
4. The issue should provide the student competent instruction balancing the various and/or conflicting points of view in an atmosphere free from bias and prejudice.
5. The issue should provide the students their right to form, identify and express their own opinions on controversial issues as long as a balanced presentation is made on conflicting positions.

F. Instructional materials shall be selected and made available to interested persons according to the following guidelines:

1. Basic textbooks for each course and/or grade level shall be selected according to I.C. 20-10.1-9, Section 21.
2. Instructional materials supportive to the basic textbooks for each course and/or grade level shall be selected by the appropriate course and/or grade level teachers and approved by the Board.
3. Additional instructional materials may be selected by individual teachers for occasional use in the classroom. Such materials are to be relevant to the levels of ability and maturity of the students, to the content of the course and to the purposes of the school system.
4. Persons wishing to review the materials listed above may do so according to the following conditions:
 - a. Basic textbooks and other instructional materials supportive to the basic textbooks can be reviewed in the Administrative Offices during normal office hours.

F. (Continued)

4. b. Additional instructional materials selected by individual teachers may be reviewed in the school building in which the individual teacher is assigned to teach so long as the reviewing does not interfere with the teacher's ability to perform his/her regular teaching duties and so long as the reviewing process does not interfere with the teacher's ability to use the instructional material being requested for review.

- G. Any parent of a student or other person residing within the boundaries of the school corporation may request that the use of basic textbooks and other instructional materials be reconsidered according to the following procedures:

1. The parent of a student having concerns about the continued use of basic textbooks and other instructional materials shall first discuss his/her concerns with the classroom teacher of the course and/or class in which the student is enrolled and in which the material is being used.

Other persons residing within the boundaries of the school corporation who have a concern about the use of basic textbooks and other instructional material shall discuss their concerns with a building principal of the level at which the material is being used.

2. If the parent or other person is not satisfied after talking with the classroom teacher or building level principal, whichever is appropriate, the parent or other person may request that the continued use of the basic textbook or other instructional material be reconsidered.

To initiate such a request for reconsideration the parent or other person shall complete Form A and file such form with the Superintendent.

3. Upon receipt of the request for reconsideration the Superintendent shall see that a local review committee is established.

The review committee shall be composed of three (3) teachers and two (2) citizens from the community selected by the Association and three (3) administrators and one (1) citizen from the community selected by the Board. The review committee shall select the chairperson from the members of the committee.

Once established, the review committee shall have thirty (30) school days to complete its reconsideration review and to make a written recommendation(s) to the Board.

G. (Continued)

If the Board does not agree with the recommendation(s) of the review committee, the Board shall return the review committee's recommendation(s) and a written statement explaining the Board's reasons for rejecting the review committee's recommendations(s) to the review committee.

The review committee shall have two (2) weeks to reconsider its initial recommendation(s) as well as the Board's written reasons for rejection of the review committee's initial recommendation(s) to the Board.

The Board shall make a decision concerning the request for reconsideration but in its disposition of the request for reconsideration the Board shall not violate this Agreement nor the laws of the State of Indiana.

4. Any disputed materials shall remain in use in the school system until the Board shall take formal specific action to remove the materials.
5. In cases where the parent of a given student requests in writing that the student not make use of a basic textbook, other instructional material supportive of the basic textbook or additional instruction materials selected by individual teachers for occasional use, the student will be given the opportunity to make use of other alternative instructional material according to the direction of the classroom teacher of the class and/or course in which the student is enrolled.

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Your schools may be the next battlefield in the crusade against 'improper' textbooks

By Barbara Parker

MEL and Norma Gabler are the proprietors of a house in Longview, Tex., that is considered by many to be the unofficial headquarters for a campaign against "improper" textbooks that is sweeping schools in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. If your school system uses the latest editions of major education publishers' textbooks, it's not unlikely that you'll eventually become embroiled in that campaign and will hear more from its leading strategists: the Gablers.

They insist they're not censors. "Only people in power can be censors," they say, preferring to speak of their operation as "the nation's largest textbook clearinghouse." The Gablers incorporated under Texas charter in 1973 as Educational Research Analysts, Inc., a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. Mel and Norma supervise a staff of six, manage a mailing list of 10,000 names, handle from 20 to 50 pieces of incoming mail a day, manage Norma's busy radio, television and public speaking schedule (which takes her out of Texas an average of three days a week). And of course, they review books. Their reviews and lists of "acceptable" as well

as "objectionable" books have been requested by people from all 50 states.

A trip to Longview reveals the extent of the Gabler's commitment: Except for one bedroom and one bath, their home-turned-clearinghouse has been converted to office space. The walls of every room are covered with shelves containing thousands of textbook and library book reviews; floor space is occupied by rows and rows of what the Gablers call "objectionable" books,

reams of printed publicity materials that describe the Gablers' work, and stacks of "acceptable" textbooks that the Gablers are fighting to see put back in classrooms. They have leased warehouse space to handle the overflow of materials.

Norma describes herself as "just a housewife and mother—the greatest profession in the world," and Mel says he's "just tired and retired." (He retired in 1973 after 29 years as a clerk with Ex-



Barbara Parker is an associate editor of the JOURNAL.

The Gablers pose with four employees. Two others work part time and, says Mel, "an additional three to four employees are needed to handle the workload."

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zon.) Despite their modest descriptions, however, by some standards the Gablers could be labeled entrepreneurs, and powerful ones at that.

It's safe to assume that if a textbook or entire curriculum suddenly is put on trial—whether it's in Warsaw, Ind., Anaheim, Calif., Kanawha County, West Va., Seattle, Wash., or Island Trees, N.Y.—the Gablers' work has had an influence.

Edward Jenkinson, professor of English education at Indiana University

(Bloomington) and chairman of the National Council of Teachers of English's (N.C.T.E.) committee against censorship, says: "Norma and Mel Gabler are the two most powerful people in education today." (The Gablers met Jenkinson on the Phil Donahue Show in 1977, and all they'll say about meeting him is that "it was a lot of fun.")

Judith Krug, director of the American Library Association's (A.L.A.) Office for Intellectual Freedom, says of the Gablers: "They are one of the keys to

many of the problems we are dealing with in the schools." Krug, whose office is one of several national organizations engaged in fighting censorship in schools, believes that the Gablers' textbook demands boil down to one basic tenet: "In effect, the Gablers are saying to school boards 'don't teach my children to think.'"

In their own defense, the Gablers say they believe that the schools—through textbooks—are teaching children to think, but to think the wrong way and

Removing books from schools: More now than anytime in the last 25 years

People like Mel and Norma Gabler are trying to remove "unacceptable" books from schools while others, like Judith Krug of the American Library Association (A.L.A.) and Edward Jenkinson of the National Council of Teachers of English (N.C.T.E.), are trying to ensure that students have a wide range of reading materials to choose from. But the Gablers, Krug and Jenkinson do agree on one point: Censorship or book removals is on the rise in schools throughout the United States and Canada—and more is on the way.

Norma Gabler says that more school books are being banned because frustrated parents are fed up with what Johnny is being forced to read. Krug and Jenkinson say the increase in censorship incidents is due to taxpayer frustration in general—and that the schools are an easy target and censorship is a favorite weapon. (See story on page 21.)

Krug estimates that almost 90 percent of the approximately 300 book-banning or censorship incidents that were reported to A.L.A.'s Office for Intellectual Freedom during the 1977-78 school year involved schools. Krug adds: "And that number was greater than at any other time in at least the last 25 years."

In a study recently completed by N.C.T.E., results showed that more than 30 percent of schools responding to a 1977 survey reported "censorship pressures" as compared with 20 percent in a similar survey taken in 1966. The 1977 N.C.T.E. survey also showed that the highest number of censorship incidents occurred in the northeastern part of the United States—34 percent—and the lowest number—28 percent—was reported in the South. The Midwest and Great Plains states were in between—32 percent. (Lee Burrell of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, who headed the N.C.T.E. research committee, said that the majority of survey returns were from east of the Rocky Mountains, "which makes regional comparisons somewhat incomplete.")

Parental pressure for censorship, according to the 1977 N.C.T.E. survey, accounted for 78 percent of reported censorship incidents. In N.C.T.E.'s 1966 survey, objections from parents amounted to 48 percent of the total.

The N.C.T.E. survey also revealed that targets of censorship in schools ranged from news magazines such as *Time*, *Newsweek* and *U.S. News and World Report* to filmstrips dealing with drug education and sex education. The most frequently objected

to school library books were some old-timers: *The Catcher in the Rye*, *Of Mice and Men*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Go Ask Alice* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

But there are new titles creeping on to censorship lists as well. In Cedar Rapids, Iowa, *Travels With Babar* was one of 104 books that were banned; in Anaheim, Calif., all of Shakespeare's works except *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet*, all of Dickens' works except *Oliver Twist*, and all but one of Mark Twain's works have been declared "unsuitable" for use in English classes.

The reasons for censorship range from "anti-God" to "anti-car." In Mahwah, N.J., according to *The Record*, the school board banned a civics textbook because, among other things, it was "anti-automobile." In presenting her objections to the board, Mrs. Arnold Blatt, who reviewed the book, said: "The book doesn't seem to be Mahwah. We're basically a middle class, working class, car driving community. Without the car, where's Mahwah?" According to Mrs. Blatt and her husband, the textbook *American Civics* advocates mass transit and public housing—problems that a small community doesn't have to deal with.—B.P.

about the wrong things. Drug education and sex education are two examples of what the Gablers are talking about. With the patience of Job, they explain: "Those kinds of courses arouse the curiosity of young children. First children become familiar with these subjects, then they discover pictures. And once they've been exposed it's just human nature that youngsters will want to experiment. Sure, they may hear something about these subjects from another kid, but for schools to spend time on these subjects gives them respectability." The Gablers add: "The biggest problem, of course, is that those courses don't say that any of it is *wrong*—they just leave the students to make up their own minds. Now, that's just not fair to our children."

The Gabler theory is this: "Allowing a student to come to his own conclusions about abstract concepts creates frustration. Ideas, situation ethics, values, anti-God humanism—that's what the schools are teaching. And concepts. Well, a concept never will do anyone as much good as a fact."

Even the lack of absolutes in higher mathematics textbooks can, according to Mel Gabler, shatter a young person's life: "When a student reads in a math book that there are no absolutes, suddenly every value he's been taught is destroyed. And the next thing you know, the student turns to crime and drugs." (In Warsaw, Ind., some members of the school board agree with this point of view and have voiced opposition to calculus and trigonometry in the system's curriculum because they aren't "basics." Warsaw is the community where "objectionable" textbooks were burned in a parking lot last year and "objectionable" courses such as values clarification and Shakespeare were dropped from the schools. In a *South Bend Tribune* article, Mel Gabler "cited the action of the Warsaw board as unique and wished more boards would follow their example." (See story on page 27.)

But Mel and Norma Gabler say they don't get involved in community controversies like those that have plagued Warsaw: "We spend our time on textbooks. That's where we concentrate our efforts, and that is one of the reasons we've been successful." The Gablers claim, simply: "All we're trying to do is get the very best books put in the hands of children and teachers." With unabashed pride, however, the Gablers also note that in 1976 they were instrumental in halting the purchases of five



Behind the curtains in a bedroom in the Gablers' home are shelves of books and rows of Gabler reviews that are requested from across North America.

dictionaries* by school systems throughout the state of Texas. The Gablers argued the dictionaries contained "vulgar language and unreasonable definitions" that placed them in violation of the state's rigorous textbook code.

The Gablers like most to talk about their Texas textbook accomplishments because it was there—in 1961—that they got their start. "Like most parents—and school board members, too," Norma says, "we had never questioned the contents of our sons' textbooks." Then, it seems, 16-year old Jim Gabler came home and told his dad, "Something's wrong with my history book." When Mel examined it, he found that the chapter on the Constitution "didn't mention one word about limitation of federal power or about state or individual rights, and was teaching that Washington has complete dictatorial power." Mel explains: "That kind of set me on fire." The flame's been burning ever since.

The Gablers recall that in those early days when Norma first appeared before the Texas state textbook selection committee, the publishers laughed at her. Mel says that he couldn't have tolerated it, but that "Normie" never lost her cool. She just sat there smiling even when she wanted to cry." That smile has become one of Norma Gabler's

trademarks. One publisher says: "She's the only person I know who can talk nonstop and smile at the same time." Something else that Norma is known for: preparation. Since they first started going to Austin in 1961 to protest books they consider unacceptable, Mel and Norma have learned to deal strictly with facts—with the facts as they see them.

And there is no doubt that *their* facts—their ratings of textbooks—have a great impact within Texas and far beyond. One publisher said: "If one of our books gets an 'unacceptable' rating from the Gablers, we can be pretty sure that our sales in Texas are going to plummet." During the fall 1978 textbook adoptions, the Gablers claim success in getting 18 of 28 textbooks removed from the Texas approved list.

When asked why she spends so much time and energy on a job that supposedly offers no monetary reward, Norma has two answers: "I do it for the love of the school children of Texas." Or: "All we're trying to do is make a school board member's, an administrator's, a teacher's job a little easier for them." Explaining the latter, Norma says: "School board members and other citizens can do what we do [review textbooks], but they just don't have the time. They *could* read the books themselves, but for us to read them will save hundreds of hours of time. You have to figure at least 40 hours per book because if you don't read them line by line, you miss the most deadly or damaging content. What we have done is to

*American Heritage Dictionary, The Doubleday Dictionary, Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, The Random House College Dictionary, and Webster's New World Dictionary of the English Language.

do their work for them. Our information is here for the asking. All that we ask is that they remember the cost of printing and distribution. We don't ask them to pay* for our reviews; we just ask them to send in a little donation so that we can go on with our work. But it's actually *their* work; I think the fact that we can save them time is where we've gained their respect."

The Gablers' thorough and painstaking efforts in poring over books is one aspect of their crusade that never has been questioned—even by their critics. Mel, who is known as the "behind the scenes" person, estimates that 2,000 hours went into the preparation of what currently are their hottest items: a comparison of five high school history textbooks and a similar study of eighth-grade history books. The high school history books were reviewed to catch and analyze proper attitudes toward free enterprise, any possible feminist bias, misplaced emphasis on certain portions of history, and preoccupation with ecology. Sheila Haralson, a 24-year-old woman who has worked for the Gablers for a year, assisted Mel in the history texts analysis. Sheila says she objects to "propaganda for the ecology movement" being included in history textbooks: "There's no reason for publishers to devote so much space in a history book to a movement that's just now picking up—and that some forces are trying to push. There are plenty of people who are opposed to the ecology movement. Actually only one side has been presented—and that's usually the pro-ecology side."

The Gablers vigorously claim that all they want in textbooks is "equal time" for the strictly fundamental beliefs and values "upon which our country was founded and which have enabled it to become the greatest country in the world"—so that "students can decide for themselves." Their critics like to point out some inconsistencies in that argument.

Repeatedly, Norma and Mel say that a problem with schools today is that children are taught "to question everything." But Richard Carroll, president of Allyn & Bacon Publishers, cautions:

*The fact that the Gablers don't *sell* anything makes it possible for them to operate their business from their house, which is not in a commercially zoned neighborhood. The Gablers say that donations from parents who have read about their work or heard Norma on late night radio talk shows and "an occasional small grant from a foundation or two" make their work possible. Mel says: "People cannot comprehend how God supplies needs—a little at a time."



Sheila Haralson, a Gabler employee, doesn't want "propaganda for the ecology movement" in textbooks.

"The Gablers have taken the word 'inquiry' and have made it dirty. For the Gablers, inquiry is something that children aren't supposed to do, and something that parents should be afraid of.

The danger in what the Gablers are espousing is that they say they want equal time—they want their beliefs to be reflected in *half* the curriculum. They may be asking for equal time today, but they're aiming for what is total control tomorrow."

Carroll adds: "The Gablers' impact is unique in that most people in their line of work are interested only in how they can affect their own communities. For the Gablers, it's a 'calling' that extends far beyond Texas."

Why is this calling so important to the Gablers? Mel explains: "Until textbooks are changed, there is no possibility that crime, violence, venereal disease and abortion rates will decrease . . . Textbooks mold nations because they largely determine how a nation votes, what it becomes, and where it goes."

And why has the calling been so popularly received in communities across North America? Edward Jenkinson of N.C.T.E. and Judith Krug of A.L.A.'s Office of Intellectual Freedom speculate that schools are a convenient target for unhappy citizens. "Many people feel that they cannot fight Washington, the

A biblical view of censorship

Mel and Norma Gabler and other critics of modern textbooks claim that these texts and other curriculum materials "do not adequately present the Judeo-Christian ethics and values upon which this country was founded," and that some of them portray the dark side of human nature. To such criticisms, Carolyn Moulton, a graduate student in theology at Ontario's Institute of Christian Thought, offers this advice:

"The Old Testament makes it clear that what ought to be attempted is a balanced and realistic portrayal of human life, which is at times somewhat less than ideal. Not only the greatest sinners but also the greatest saints did a number of things which, while not lauded, were recognized as being part of life: David had his fling with Bathsheba; Noah was drunk and naked in front of his sons; Aaron, the highest

of the high priests, built and worshipped the golden calf . . . *There is something to be lost by presenting students with a filtered concept of life.* People have a responsibility to be reflectively aware of their surrounding world. Development of this ability is one of the prime goals of education. While the Bible does say that one is not to be 'corrupted by the philosophies of men,' it also makes it clear that one ought to be aware of them," according to Moulton.

In an essay in *Censorship: Stopping the Book Banners*, Moulton goes on to suggest that parents who are concerned that their 16-year-old is going to be corrupted by reading about a premarital sex act may be saying more about how well they have prepared their child for the realities of life than they are saying about the book in question.—A.P.



Norma Gabler stands next to a double-duty bed: By day it's a board used as work space.

state capital, or even city hall," they say, "so when they become unhappy with inflation, federal or state laws, the so-called moral decline, or anything else, they want to lash out. Taxpayers have a tendency to feel that almost everything wrong with society stems from the schools. So the schools become a target for irate taxpayers—and censorship is one of their weapons."

These angry citizens aim their ire and persuasion squarely at school board members. In materials they send to parents, the Gablers recommend: "The first approach to getting things corrected is through school boards." Norma adds: "I personally believe that many school boards' members aren't vocal enough, but that's because they're not informed enough." To help inform them, the Gablers recommend that parents use the reviews that the Gablers have prepared—"to save them time." Then the Gablers urge parents to "select the board member you know best or the one you think will be most receptive to your problem." The next step is to write and thank that board member for his dedicated service to the community and to its children. Toward the end of this letter of thanks the Gablers recommend that a sentence be slipped in which "acknowledges that the board member is a very busy person and that you are appreciative of his time." Then the writer is advised that if the board member can't spare the time to look into the objectionable book matter or if it doesn't fall within his area of interest, "the

board member should be asked to let the writer know—so that another board member can be contacted." Above all, the advice is: "Stick with the board members, not the educators—and offer all the assistance you can muster." If an objecting parent is told that he is "the only parent who has objected to this material," the Gablers will, upon request, "furnish the names of existing parent groups nearest you for support."

And if all else fails, Norma herself can fly into town to enlighten the school board (provided that parents come up with an honorarium and travel expenses) and to share "18 years of 'know-how' in helping you to secure better textbooks."

Two people familiar with the Gabler strategy are Ken Underwood, former superintendent of the Kanawha County (West Virginia) schools, and Frances Link, director of Curriculum Development Associates, who is known today as "the woman behind MACOS"—the controversial social studies curriculum entitled *Man: A Course of Study*. (The fight to get MACOS out of the schools has taken Norma throughout the United States and overseas to Australia and New Zealand.)

Neither Underwood nor Link has ever met the Gablers, but both say they "are well aware of their work." Frances Link calls Norma "a very effective 'surprise attack.'" From photographs I've seen and reports I've heard, she's a sweet, motherly lady who stands for all that is good and wholesome, which, of course, makes her almost invulnerable."

Link says there is a pattern to Norma's appearances in a community: "Usually it's right before a school board election or when a controversy erupts." Link tells of a telephone call she received from the assistant superintendent of a small, rural school system in the Northwest where the MACOS curriculum had been used—without incident—for five years. The superintendent told her that suddenly the curriculum was coming under fire from people in the community and a few members of the school board. Link then asked the superintendent if there was a school board election coming up and he answered affirmatively. Next, Link asked him if the school board had a policy of asking people at school board meetings to "log in." The superintendent said there was no such policy, and Link urged him to recommend this procedure be used for the next board meeting. She further advised the superintendent: "Be

prepared for a lady to fly into town and buy radio and television time prior to the board meeting." Link continues: "Sure enough, three or four days before the board meeting, Norma Gabler appeared on radio and TV . . . and a check of the attendance log at the board meeting revealed that at least half of the people at that meeting were not from the local community." (MACOS subsequently was dropped from the curriculum and the superintendent was fired.)

Ken Underwood, who was superintendent of schools during Kanawha County's 1974 textbook controversy, received a MAILGRAM and a note from the Gablers during the textbook battle that erupted in his school system. In part, both pieces of the Gablers' correspondence told Underwood: "You were presented on tonight's television in the role of trying to resolve the problem of textbooks in your school system . . . perhaps we can help you. We are in our 14th year of offering a service to schools and teachers concerning textbooks . . ." Underwood didn't respond. The Gablers deny they were trying to take advantage of a situation and sell their services to a beleaguered superintendent, but Underwood says: "Three or four days after I received the second note from the Gablers, I picked up the morning paper and read that the Gablers were to be the principal speakers at an antitextbook rally to be held at the Charleston ball park."

When asked what kind of help he and Norma were offering to Ken Under-



Mel Gabler works "behind the scenes" to keep the office in order.

wood, Mel replies: "Well, we always take it for granted that the superintendent is going to want to cooperate and want to straighten things out once he knows what the situation is. Since we have all of these materials we do try to help, and there's been many a superintendent who's appreciated what we've done. But Underwood didn't."

In a book about the Gablers (*Textbooks on Trial*, which now is distributed solely by the Gablers' Educational Research Analysts, Inc.), Author James C. Hefley says that according to leaders of the West Virginia protests, "the Gablers' contribution was significant." Larry Freeman of the West Virginia textbook review committee said: "They [the Gablers] showed us how to docu-

ment our objections to a bad text by page, paragraph and line." And a board member active in the protest adds: "They gave us encouragement when we needed it most."

Interestingly, the six language arts books and the two speech books that sparked the controversy in Kanawha County in 1974 were up for adoption in Texas during the same fall. Before going to West Virginia, Norma presented detailed bills of particulars objecting to those eight books; many of her identical page, paragraph and line objections appeared in antitextbook ads that ran in Charleston newspapers. That fall in Texas, the state textbook committee eliminated seven of the eight objectionable books and required extensive

changes in the eighth; 1974 was a very good year for the Gablers—their very best up to that point.

After 1974, the Gablers' influence spread. Norma hit the talk show trail, was invited to Australia to speak out against MACOS, and appeared on a couple of national television shows. More mail poured into Longview requesting the Gablers' reviews and Norma for speaking engagements throughout the United States and Canada. More employees had to be hired and more of the Gablers' home had to be turned into office space.

Since then, the Gablers have had a lot of good years. And the better they get, the more likely you are to hear from them. □

In censorship battles, you might become the target for personal attacks — like these:

By Barbara Parker

Most of the material I collected for this issue's stories on textbook controversies came from interviews with school officials, parents and publishers. But a couple of anonymous telephone calls to my home have earned me the right to pass along the following advice on a personal level, from me to you: Be warned that when and if a textbook censorship controversy hits your school system, you're likely to be a target for some emotionally charged attacks. Here are some examples:

- Ken Underwood, who was superintendent of schools in Kanawha County (West Virginia) during the 1974 textbook battles there, was forced to move his family members out of their home. Repeated threats on their lives came through phone calls and letters. To ignore them would have been foolish: Protestors already had used shotguns to blow out several windows at the board of education building, and numerous other shoot-

ings and beatings had occurred. Because of the threats, Underwood "felt compelled to request around-the-clock police protection" for his family members until they could vacate their home.

- Jackie and Anthony Zykan, parents of two Warsaw, Ind., students who have filed suit against the Warsaw school system (see story on page 27), have received a few "ugly" phone calls and several of what Jackie Zykan calls "hate letters." One of them, addressed to "the smut peddlers," reads in part: "Can't you get it through your rotten heads that it is your kind of permissiveness that is causing this unprecedented situation of lawlessness and immorality in our country? Why in the name of heaven don't you just go back to wherever it is you came from and take your smutty family and rotten concepts along with you. Praise be the day that you leave this area. /Signed/ Many natives." Another letter the Zykans received was addressed to "the aliens" (the Zykans moved to Warsaw from Chicago in 1964). The scrawled

note reads: "If you were halfway intelligent you would recall that these books were banned by a vast majority of the school patrons and taxpayers. But know /sic/, you are stupid enough to force we taxpayers to finance another lawsuit. We pay our school board to run and manage our school system and not some damn foreigners such as you. My advice to you is if you don't like the way things are run here, get the hell out. You won't be missed. /Signed/ A large taxpayer."

- In the early stages of researching the censorship articles in this issue, I received telephone calls from people obviously worried over the outcome of the story. While there is no reason to believe that these calls were precipitated by the Gablers or anyone connected with their organization, one caller did warn: "If you write anything that's slanderous to Mel and Norma Gabler, your child is going to pay for it." Another caller suggested that if I believed anything that Jackie Zykan told me, then both Zykan and I were "nothing but cheap, two-bit whores."

In Warsaw, Ind., educators are told to cut 'offensive' words out of books

When Edward Jenkinson of the National Council of Teachers of English was asked to rate—on a scale of 1 to 10—the severity of censorship in Warsaw, Ind., schools, Jenkinson replied: "About 25."

Since 1977, the Warsaw school system has given way to what some might call anarchy: the superintendent of seven years has left; the chairman of the English department has quit; courses covering Shakespeare, creative writing, Gothic literature, black literature, folklore and legends, values clarification and science fiction have been dropped arbitrarily from the curriculum; principals have been instructed to bring to the board any teaching materials that "appear to be in poor taste" and several books have been removed from the schools on those and similar grounds; teachers have been instructed to "cut out words or pages containing offensive language" from a literary criticism book; the high school newspaper no longer is being published. And a senior citizens group built a bonfire out of objectionable books that had been removed from the schools and turned over to the senior citizens group.

The current superintendent, Charles F. Bragg and his supporters—the school board, the town newspaper (*The Warsaw Times-Union*), a parent organization (People Who Care), and others—claim that what happened in Warsaw is little more than a return to more traditional teaching methods. They maintain that administrators who order the scissoring or banning of books are just doing their jobs.

Although the administration and school board might view the commotion in Warsaw as merely a move back to basics, there are others who strongly disagree. Four lawsuits now are pending against the Warsaw school system.

One has been filed by Warsaw students, Brooke and Blair Zykan. In their complaint they allege that school officials violated the First Amendment rights of students at the high school by banning books and removing courses from the curriculum. One part of the Zykan's class action suit asks that the court "restrain school officials from

removing any books and changing curriculum until a reasonable and impartial procedure for such future action has been formulated." The Indiana Civil Liberties Union is representing the Zykans.

The other three lawsuits against the school system have been filed by the following: JoAnn DuPont, a former Warsaw teacher who says her contract was not renewed because she spoke out against the censorship incidents; by Teresa Burnau, who taught the "women in literature" course that used four of the banned books (*Go Ask Alice*, *The Stepford Wives*, *The*

Bell Jar, and *Growing Up Female in America*); and by two high school students, Anne Summe and Jeri Grisso, who claim that school officials have violated their First Amendment rights by failing to allow publication of the high school newspaper *Kontac* and censoring student-written stories that appear every other week in *The Warsaw Times-Union*.

According to the suit being filed by the Zykans, school administrators in Warsaw instructed teachers "not to use books in the classroom that they would be embarrassed to read to the school board."—B.P.



In December 1977, members of a Warsaw, Ind., senior citizens group burned "objectionable" textbooks that had been removed from Warsaw classrooms under orders from the school board. Books being discarded by the schools in Warsaw routinely are made available to nonprofit groups, and the senior citizens group requested the banned books specifically for burning. According to the president of the senior citizens group, a majority of the members voted to pick up the books "if and when we could burn them."

Sound policies and a well-informed public can ward off censorship controversies

If your school system hasn't yet been involved in a censorship controversy, either you've been lucky or your board has a well-established policy on dealing with textbook or library book criticism. Good luck being generally unreliable, here are some guidelines that you should follow *before a censorship controversy arises*:

- Every school system should have a set of textbook adoption procedures that are made clear to the public *before* textbooks are adopted.

- Every school system should have a set of procedures for dealing with complaints about textbooks, library books and other teaching materials. (Edward Jenkinson of the National Council of Teachers of English adds: "And every person within the school system—school board member, administrator, classroom teacher, school librarian—should follow the procedures carefully. No one person in a democratic society should have the authority, nor should assume the authority, to remove a book from a classroom or library without the full consent of an informed majority.")

- The board has an obligation to listen to any and all parental complaints concerning textbooks, library books and other instructional materials. And the complainant has the right to expect that he will be given a fair hearing.

- The removal of a book, film, record, or entire course should be a last resort that occurs *only* after the entire complaint procedure has been followed.

- School boards should request legal guidelines from their attorneys based on the most recent federal court decisions concerning academic freedom and censorship in the schools.

- School boards should have a written list of criteria that is used in textbook, library book and other curriculum material selection. The criteria may be an appropriate target for criticism, but an individual book *that fits the guidelines* is not.

- School boards have a responsibility to keep the public informed about what is being taught in the schools and why. If you're using books that have been censored (by anyone, anywhere, for any

reason), school board members, administrators, and teachers should be aware of it and know the rationale for using the books. Ken Donelson of N.C.T.E. suggests: "Perhaps a discussion of 'controversial' or 'contemporary' literature could take place at some school function. A series of evening programs for parents could be devoted to explaining why certain books are taught or are being used in the schools."

There are many organizations that can assist you in preparing guidelines for the selection of textbooks and other curricular materials and for the handling of complaints. Some of them are:

The National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Rd., Urbana, Ill. 61801 (217/328-3870).

American Library Association Office for Intellectual Freedom, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, Ill. 60611 (312/944-6780).

American Association of School Administrators, 1801 North Moore St., Rosslyn, Va. 22209 (703/528-0700).

National School Boards Association, 1055 Thomas Jefferson St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007 (202/337-7666).

American Civil Liberties Union, 22 E. 40th St., New York 10016 (212/925-1222).

National Education Association, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 (202/833-4000).

National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1801 North Moore St., Rosslyn, Va. 22209 (703/528-6000).

National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1904 Association Drive, Reston, Va. 22091 (703/860-0200).

American Federation of Teachers, 11 Dupont Circle, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 (202/797-4400).

In Canada, assistance may be obtained from:

Canadian School Trustees Association, Suite 507, 30 Metcalfe St., Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5L4 Canada (613/236-9153).

Ontario School Trustees Association, 120 Eglinton Ave. East, Toronto 315, Ontario, Canada (416/486-1200).

The Book and Periodical Development Council, 86 Bloor St. W. Ste. 215, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1M5 Canada.

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association, 229 Yonge St., Ste. 403, Toronto, Ontario M5B 1N9 Canada.

The Canadian Library Association, 151 Sparks St., Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

—B.P.



Are You Ready for Attacks on Your Textbooks, Teaching Methods
and Homework Assignments?

Edward B. Jenkinson
Professor of English Education
Director of the English Curriculum Study Center
Indiana University

In a mid-December radio broadcast over a Wisconsin statewide network,¹ the founder of PARENTS (People of America Responding to Educational Needs of Today's Society) declared that "education" has been removed from the schools. She noted that teachers are preoccupied with asking students what they think about a given work or idea -- not what they know about it. She expressed her belief that everything good had been removed from classrooms -- God, prayer, the basics, uplifting education, and so forth. Finally, she stated that elementary and secondary school teachers have no right to academic freedom because they have a captive audience, and she quoted from a federal court case to support her contention that many teachers are not sufficiently trained nor intelligent enough to merit academic freedom.

If the soft-spoken woman from Wisconsin were only one of a handful of opponents of academic freedom for public school teachers, she could be dismissed. But she does not stand alone. She is one of the scores of "concerned parents" who have formed groups -- local, state, and national -- to attack textbooks, library materials, teaching methods, entire courses, and homework assignments.

Estimates of the number of textbook pressure groups in the United States range from eighty to two hundred. Probably no one could make an accurate count at any given time since some groups are formed to attack a single book and then they disappear. Other groups have enlisted hundreds -- even thousands of members -- and have mounted tactically sound campaigns against books and courses. Some groups -- the Heritage Foundation, the John Birch Society, and the National Congress for

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Educational Excellence -- have captured attention nationwide. Other groups -- People Who Care (Warsaw), the Indiana Education Coalition, and the Indiana Home Circle -- have served notice in their communities that, although they may not be nationally prominent, they certainly cannot be ignored.

Every textbook pressure group has its specific targets, and the organizations tend to share the objects of their wrath with other groups. They exchange petitions, textbook reviews, articles about secular humanism -- "the religion of the public schools," strategies for attacking books, and guidelines for the selection of school materials. The members of the organizations work very hard and spend many hours attempting to achieve their goal -- to rid the schools of textbooks that are "anti-God, anti-parent, anti-country, and immoral."

An examination of hundreds of pages of materials distributed by the pressure groups yields these twenty targets:

1. "Dirty words" in dictionaries. After several parents charged that "seventy or eighty" words in The American Heritage Dictionary are obscene or otherwise inappropriate for high school students, the school board ordered the dictionary removed from the high school in Cedar Lake, Indiana.² In Eldon, Missouri, after twenty-four parents filed a complaint noting that thirty-nine words in the AHD are "objectionable," the school board voted to remove the dictionary from a junior high school.³

Anticipating a protest against the AHD and other dictionaries in 1976, Texas Education Commissioner Marlin Brockette stated that no works would be purchased that "present material which would cause embarrassing situations or interfere in the learning atmosphere in the classroom." By quoting that subsection of the Texas textbook adoption proclamation, Commissioner Brockette apparently justified the removal of these five dictionaries from the purchase list

in Texas: the AHD, The Doubleday Dictionary, The Random House Dictionary of the English Language -- College Edition, Webster's New World Dictionary -- Students' Edition, and Webster's Seventh Collegiate Dictionary.⁴

2. Drug education courses. Some pressure groups contend that incidents of drug use rise sharply after students take courses in drug education.

3. Sex education courses. One vocal critic of education calls sex education "how-to courses."⁵

4. Values clarification. The co-founder of a textbook review clearing house wrote: "Even proponents of Values Clarification concede that it is based entirely upon relativism or 'situation ethics' (the philosophy that circumstances determine whether an action is right or wrong). Granted, some students may select absolute, moral positions; but since teachers are prohibited from favoring any moral stand, decisions will be heavily influenced by peer group knowledge and peer pressure. How many students will be able to stand firm in their religious faith while being constantly confronted by relativism in a public school classroom?...Thus, in practice, Values Clarification DESTROYS HOME TAUGHT VALUES."⁶

5. Assignments that are invasions of privacy. The pressure groups dislike any classroom or homework assignments that call for students to express opinions that are based on their family background. The critics also abhor assignments that call for students to write or talk about their families.

6. Materials that defame historical personalities. Some of the critics do not want any negative traits of any of the nation's heroes mentioned in textbooks or discussed in class.

7. Ethnic studies. Some groups consider ethnic studies to be un-American.

8. Pagan cultures and life styles. One organization maintains that the

study of pagan cultures is actually an attempt by teachers and textbook writers to promote such cultures and life styles.

9. Novels for adolescents. The organized censors do not approve of the subjects that novelists select today for treatment in stories for teen-agers. Parents prone to censor books do not think their children should be reading Paul Zindel's The Pigman, S.E. Hinton's The Outsiders, John Donovan's I'll Get There, It Better Be Worth the Trip, Nat Hentoff's I'm Really Dragged But Nothing Gets Me Down, Paul Zindel's My Darling, My Hamburger, Judy Blume's Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret, and dozens of other popular books. Many protective parents do not want their sons and daughters reading books about student conflicts with parents, drug use and abuse, sex, homosexuality, teen-age violence, the horrors of the ghetto, teen-age pregnancy, and so forth. Such parents seem to remember the books they read when they were young, and they want the schools to focus attention on those books. Thus, the irate parents would have the schools remove the works of such authors as Judy Blume, Nat Hentoff, and Paul Zindel and replace them with the novels of Betty Cavanna, Anne Emery, Rossmund DuJardin, and John R. Tunis.

10. Realistic dialogue. Proponents of the back-to-basics movement do not want their children reading sentences that are not grammatically correct. Thus, they object to stories in which authors have characters speak sub-standard English. In other words, some censors believe that all characters in all books must speak standard English at all times. Otherwise, the censors contend, their children will be taught to use sub-standard English since they will imitate the language of the characters in books.

11. The works of "questionable" writers. The organized censors have a tendency to label authors as "questionable" if the censors do not agree with the

ideas of the writers. The organized censors decry anthologies that contain stories, poems, and essays by such writers as Langston Hughes, Dick Gregory, Ogden Nash, Richard Wright, Joan Baez, and Malcolm X. Such writers are also labeled subversive, and the censors do not think that children should read any of their works.

12. The literature of homosexuals. Here is a portion of a message distributed by members of a Save Our Children group: "SAVE OUR CHILDREN wishes to thank those members of your community who, with their contributions, helped sweep us to victory in Florida. The battle has only begun, however, and soon we will carry our campaign all over the nation...For years homosexuals have been hogging the news with their demands for equal rights, and it is time we pushed back. It is time that, along with thieves and murderers, they be branded for the sinners they are and removed from society...You can fight to eliminate homosexual literature from our schools and libraries. This includes works by such homosexuals as:

Emily Dickinson	Gertrude Stein	John Milton
Willa Cather	Virginia Woolf	Hans Christian Andersen
Tennessee Williams	Walt Whitman	Marcel Proust
Oscar Wilde	Andre Gide	Horatio Alger Jr.
T. E. Lawrence	Jean Cocteau	Truman Capote
Jean Genet	Gore Vidal	Rod McKuen

13. "Trash." Books that are frequently labeled "trash" include The Catcher in the Rye, Flowers for Algernon, Soul on Ice, Forever, Black Boy, Laughing Boy, Go Ask Alice, and most contemporary novels for adolescents.

14. Ideas, teaching methods, and books that are examples of "secular humanism." In the Foreword to James C. Hefley's Textbooks on Trial, Congressman John

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Conlan writes: "Bad textbooks full of immoral content and violence, biased toward increasing the centralized power of a secular humanistic state, will ultimately destroy the family, decent social standards, and basic principles of decentralized government that safeguard every American's individual freedom." Throughout Textbooks on Trial, a book about the censorship campaigns of Norma and Mel Gabler, the author indicates that secular humanism is a religion running rampant through America's schools.

Included in a packet of materials that the Gablers sent to one concerned parent is this statement on Humanism, which is apparently used here as a synonym for Secular Humanism:

Humanism is a recognized religion that believes man is God and rejects biblical standards of living.

This religion has replaced Christianity and the Bible in public schools and the Humanist values are being forced upon our children.

Parents are being told that schools are not in the business of teaching religion and values. This is not true.

....
This philosophy teaches there are no absolutes. Everything is relative. There is no God; no supreme authority. Students are to realize there are many shades of gray and must move away from black-white thinking. There are many alternatives from which to choose. Every authority and belief is brought into question through exercises designed to change values.

15. The humanities, behavior modification, and so forth. Concerned parents can obtain petitions that they can present to an administrator or teacher

that call for the removal of their children from classes in which a variety of topics are discussed or a variety of methods are used. This petition, or a variation of it, was presented to teachers and/or administrators in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1975, in Culver, Indiana in 1976, in Deer River, Minnesota in 1977, and in Austin, Texas in 1977:

This letter is to inform you that certain rights and privileges with regard to the instruction of our child _____ are permanently and specifically reserved by us, the parent(s). The familial relationship involving personal relationships, attitudes, responsibilities, and religious and social training are the sole prerogative of the parents.

Therefore, you are hereby notified that our child _____ will not be enrolled, instructed, or made to participate in any course or class, workshop, study group, etc. which includes: instruction in any training or education in sex and/or sexual attitudes, personal and family emotional development, introspective examination of social and cultural aspects of family life, group therapy or group criticism of family life, "sensitivity training", "magic circles", Human Development programs, social awareness, self-awareness or self-understanding, situation ethics, value judgment, values clarification, moral value alteration, Behavior Modification, Reality Therapy, ethnic studies, "Humanities", the philosophies of the Humanist religion, the Occult, or any combination or degree thereof, without the consent of the undersigned by express written and signed permission.

16. Role playing. In Park Rapids, Minnesota, parents attending a meeting of concerned citizens received a set of guidelines for the selection of public school material that included this statement: "Classroom materials, text books, etc., must not use psycho-drama (role playing) as a teaching tool."

17. Materials that contain negative statements about parents. The guidelines distributed at a meeting in Park Rapids, Minnesota noted that classroom "materials, textbooks, audio and/or visual aids must not portray parents as unloving, stupid, hypocritical, old fashioned, possessive nor in any other negative way." Similar statements have been made by censors elsewhere in the United States.

18. Phase-elective English programs. Proponents of the back-to-basics movement are calling for the abolition of phase-elective programs. People who cannot even describe phase-elective programs are blaming them for the declining SAT scores, for the failure of Johnny to write well, and for the failure of Susie to read well.

19. Sexist stereotypes. Members of the feminist movement are objecting to school materials that stereotype women.

20. Racist statements. The Council on Interracial Books for Children has objected to books that contain racist slurs. The council has actively campaigned for fairer treatment of all races in textbooks, but it has also listed books, including novels, that should be removed from school shelves.

Those are only twenty targets of the censors. There are more, and there will be many more as the organizations continue to examine all aspects of public school education.

What can be done to combat the pressure groups? What must teachers do to survive the censorship of the seventies?

HH

Here are ten steps that I think are essential:

1. Develop a system-wide set of procedures for handling parental complaints and encourage all teachers, administrators, and school board members to follow the procedures without any deviations. (Sample sets of procedures can be obtained from the National Council of Teachers of English and the American Library Association.)
2. Develop a system-wide textbook and library book selection policy.
3. Write rationales for every controversial book that you teach.
4. Make certain that each department chairperson has a written statement of philosophy for what is taught in the department.
5. Examine the master teaching contract to make certain there is no clause that bargains away academic freedom.
6. Write objectives for all of the courses that you teach and be prepared to explain how your teaching materials and teaching methods help to meet those objectives.
7. Subscribe to the Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom, which is published by the Intellectual Freedom Committee of the American Library Association, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611.
8. Help to launch a system-wide communications campaign in which teachers and administrators attempt to explain to students and parents what the schools are trying to do, how they go about their task, how and why they teach certain concepts, and so forth. (According to some of the censors, much of the criticism of the schools stems from the failure of educators to communicate with both students and parents.)
9. Never be condescending to parents who have a complaint. (An officer of Parents of Minnesota said that parents who question or object to materials

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often are slapped down by educators. "We are constantly reminded that we don't have a degree. We'll be at a stalemate until we reach a point where educators stop being condescending and listen to parents' concerns," she said. "Education is a kind of a sacred cow, and teachers are on a pedestal. If you disagree, there must be something wrong with you. You're crazy; a nut."⁷)

10. Conduct system-wide or school-wide workshops on censorship so that all teachers and administrators will understand the problem and will be able to cope with it.

Notes

1. The Wisconsin Issues Forum, which was broadcast by WHA - Madison on December 17, 1978. Jil Wilson represented PARENTS; the author of this article was one of the invited panelists who opposed the censorship of school materials.
2. Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom. Volume XXV, No. 6, November 1976. p. 145.
3. Reported in The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, April 18, 1977.
4. Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom, op. cit.
5. Mel Gabler on The Phil Donahue Show, January 16, 1978. Mr. Gabler is the president of Educational Research Analysts.
6. Mel Gabler in a mimeographed handout for parents concerned about values clarification.
7. Reported in The Minneapolis Tribune, September 24, 1978.

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It is indoctrination she wants, not education

When Indiana State Sen. Joan Gubbins thinks of education, what she really seems to have in mind is indoctrination.

Under a bill she cosponsored and won approval for in the Senate, Hoosier schools would be required to use only those textbooks and instructional materials that teach "high moral standards."

In order to win the imprimatur of the Commission for Textbook Adoption, for instance, school materials would have to stress such standards as honesty, responsibility, respect for parents and authority, importance of the work ethic and the existence of "absolute values."

The family, the free-market economy and the "effectiveness of the system" would apparently have to be shown in a favorable light. Books would be banned if they ridicule religion or encourage "degrading behavior."

If this censorship plan is enacted, the range of reading matter to which students could legally be exposed would be absurdly small. One senator wryly noted that the adventures of Huck Finn, whose value system was the very antithesis of the work ethic, would be forbidden fruit.

So, presumably, would the novels of Ernest Hemingway, who once wrote: "I know only that what is good is what you feel good after."

times opinion

Education, of course, is supposed to broaden youth's understanding of the world, not to constrict it, as Sen. Gubbins would like it to do.

Schools should make students aware of complexity and diversity and introduce them to new ideas and viewpoints, including some that are at odds with what they believe. Future citizens of a democratic nation must learn to look critically at their own institutions, to question "eternal truths."

Sen. Gubbins, however, seems to want the next generation to be aware only of her personal views of right and wrong. Some of her standards are in fact widely accepted. But students should realize that many highly moral people could compile an entirely different list.

Her absolutist approach, moreover, has serious flaws. Respect for authority can't be taught as always good, for instance, since authority is sometimes quite evil. A youngster who is taught to believe totally in the effectiveness of the system will find he has been badly misled.

There is much disagreement as to what a good education is. But an inadequate education is one that



Sen. Gubbins: Hers is an 'absolutist approach'

limits a student's intellectual horizons. It is preposterous to suppose that a school system can be taken seriously if it is forced to eschew all teaching that is not in harmony with the moral code promulgated by the Indiana Senate.

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